District of Columbia Teachers' Retirement Plan

Summary Plan Description
2002

This booklet is a summary of your retirement plan. The full text of the plan is contained in Title 38 of the Code of the District of Columbia. The Treasury Department has also issued regulations pertaining to this plan in the Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.), at 31 C.F.R. Part 29. If there is any conflict between the information in this summary and the D.C. Code or Federal Regulations, the plan terms in the D.C. Code and Federal Regulations will always govern.

Who Is Responsible for the Teachers' Retirement Plan?

Under Title XI of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, Pub. L. 105-33, as amended, the Treasury Department and the District of Columbia share responsibility for the Teachers' Retirement Plan. The Treasury Department is responsible for providing retirement benefits based on service performed by a **DCPS teacher*** on or before June 30, 1997. The District of Columbia Government is responsible for providing retirement benefits based on service performed by a teacher after June 30, 1997.

Collective Bargaining Agreements

Collective bargaining agreements may affect your retirement benefit. Contact your collective bargaining unit for more information.

The District of Columbia Retirement Board

Your retirement plan has a Retirement Board of Trustees, made up of 12 members. This Board is an independent agency that manages and controls the funds for benefits earned after June 30, 1997.

The Board of Trustees as of July 1, 2002

For more information about how the Teachers' Retirement Plan is administered, please see "Administrative Information" on page 40.

*Bold words or phrases underlined in green can be found in the Glossary of Terms, beginning on page 46.

About This Booklet

This summary plan description contains important information about the Teachers' Retirement Plan, such as how the plan works, how you become eligible for a retirement benefit and how to calculate your benefit. If you have an earlier summary plan description, please discard it.

A New Approach

This booklet has been designed to be easy to read and understand. Some features of this booklet include:

- "Fast Facts" on page 4, to provide you with a quick overview of your retirement plan;
- helpful information—such as phone numbers and definitions—in the margin;
- a chapter about "life events," beginning on page 9, which describes how your benefits are affected by marriage, divorce, leaves of absence, disability and death;
- frequently asked questions, beginning on page 41, for answers to some of the most common questions about your retirement benefits;
- a list of phone numbers and addresses for important retirement plan contacts, on page 45; and
- a glossary of terms, beginning on page 46, to help you understand plan terms.

You should keep this booklet in a safe place and share it with your family, because it also contains information about benefits for your survivors.

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Fast Facts About Your Retirement Plan

What is the definition of a "DCPS teacher"?

This plan defines "DCPS teacher" as an employee who served in a salary class position ET 1-15 under the DCPS system or is eligible as a beginning employee of a District of Columbia Public Charter School. Refer to the glossary on page 47 for more information.

You are automatically enrolled in the Teachers' Retirement Plan when you begin working as a teacher (and certain other educational employees) in the District of Columbia Public School **(DCPS) system** in a salary class position ET 1-15. See page 6 for more information.

You must contribute a portion of your salary to help pay for your retirement benefit. Your contributions are automatically deducted from your paycheck. See page 7 for more information.

In general, if you have worked at least five years as a DCPS teacher, you may retire at:

- — age 62;
- — age 60 if you have 20 years of service;
- — age 55 if you have 30 years of service, if you were hired before November 16, 1996; or
- — any age if you have 30 years of service, if you were hired on or after November 16, 1996.

For details, see page 14.

The term "service" includes your work as a DCPS teacher (DCPS service), and certain non-DCPS work (**credited service**). Credited service is described on page 18.

You may "buy" up to ten years of service if you've worked outside the DCPS system in a public day school or equivalent school system that is not in the District of Columbia. See page 18 for details.

If you leave the Teachers' Retirement Plan after you have worked for at least five years as a teacher but before you are eligible to retire, you may choose to receive either a deferred retirement benefit or a refund of your contributions. The deferred retirement benefit is payable at age 62. (See page 15.)

If you leave the Teachers' Retirement Plan before you have worked for at least five years as a DCPS teacher, you will receive a refund of the contributions you made to the retirement fund. (See page 11.)

If you become disabled, you may be eligible for a disability retirement benefit if you have worked for at least five years as a DCPS teacher. The disability retirement benefit is explained on page 15.

If you die *before* you retire and you have at least 18 months of DCPS service, your spouse and **eligible children** or **dependent parents** may receive a **survivor benefit**.

If you die *after* you retire, your eligible children will receive a survivor benefit. Your **surviving spouse** will receive a survivor benefit only if you elect one when you retire. Survivor benefits are described on pages 24-27.

Your Retirement Plan At-A-Glance

<table>
<tr><td>Eligibility for a Retirement Benefit</td><td colspan="2">• In general, if you have worked at least five years as a DCPS teacher, you may retire at:
• age 62;
• age 60 if you have 20 years of service;
• age 55 if you have 30 years of service, if you were hired before November 16, 1996; or
• any age if you have 30 years of service, if you were hired on or after November 16, 1996.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Your Cost</td><td colspan="2">• You must contribute 7% of your annual salary to the retirement fund if you were hired before November 16, 1996.
• You must contribute 8% of your annual salary to the retirement fund if you were hired on or after November 16, 1996.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Survivor Benefits</td><td>If you die before you retire but after completing 18 months of DCPS service:
• Your eligible spouse will automatically receive a survivor benefit from this plan.
• Your eligible children will automatically receive a survivor benefit from this plan.</td><td>If you die after you retire:
• Your eligible children will automatically receive a survivor benefit from this plan.
• Your spouse will receive a survivor benefit only if you elect one when you retire.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Types of Retirement Benefits</td><td colspan="2">• Voluntary retirement benefit
• Involuntary retirement benefit
• Deferred retirement benefit
• Disability retirement benefit</td></tr>
</table>

Retirement Plan Participation

If you are eligible, you are automatically a participant in the Teachers' Retirement Plan when you begin working in the DCPS system. Enrollment is automatic—you do not have to do anything to participate in the plan. Note that participation in the plan is mandatory for eligible teachers.

Eligible Teachers
This plan defines "teacher" as an employee who serves in a salary class position ET 1-15 under the DCPS system. You are also a teacher if you are eligible as an employee of a District of Columbia Public Charter School, as explained below.

Public Charter Schools

As long as you make the required contributions (described on page 7), you may also participate in this plan if you work in a D.C. Public Charter School and you:

- **leave the DCPS system** and you begin working in the charter school within 60 days of the date you left the DCPS system and you elect to remain in the D.C. Teachers' Retirement Plan; or
- **take a leave of absence** without pay from the DCPS system to work in the charter school.

For more information about leaving the DCPS system to work in a D.C. Public Charter School, see the "Life Events" chapter on page 9.

Your Retirement Fund Contributions

You share in the cost of providing your retirement benefit with the Treasury Department and/or the D.C. Government. To help pay for your retirement benefit, you must make contributions to the retirement fund.

You may be able to receive credit toward your retirement for certain types of non-**teaching service**. This is called "credited service." You can make **service contributions** to the retirement fund so that your credited service adds to your retirement benefit. Most military service does not need to be purchased. Credited service is described on page 18.

If you leave the DCPS system before you retire, you can either receive a lump sum payment of the contributions you've made or elect a deferred retirement benefit if you meet the eligibility requirements.

Your Mandatory Contributions

Each pay period, your **mandatory contribution** is deducted automatically from your paycheck. Your contribution is either 7% or 8% of your annual salary, depending on when you were hired. Based on the statutes:

- you contribute 7% of your annual salary to the retirement fund if you were hired before November 16, 1996; or
- you contribute 8% of your annual salary to the retirement fund if you were hired on or after November 16, 1996.

Your Voluntary Contributions

You may choose to put more money into the retirement fund to add to your benefit at retirement. You may contribute up to an additional 10% of your annual salary each year in increments of $25.

Earning Interest on Your Voluntary Contributions

If you made **voluntary contributions** to the fund on or before June 30, 1997, your contributions earn the average rate of return on investment for the Federal Retirement Fund.

The voluntary contributions that you made after June 30, 1997 earn the average annual rate of return on investment for the District Retirement Fund. Note that this can be a negative rate of return.

NOTE: You will not receive **cost of living adjustments** (COLAs) on the voluntary contributions that you make. For more information about COLAs, see page 23.

For more information about voluntary contributions, contact the Office of Human Resources **(OHR)** at 202-442-4080.

If you leave the DCPS system

If you leave the DCPS system before you retire, you are entitled to a refund of your contributions in a lump sum payment. In order to receive your refund, you must file an application immediately, but no later than 31 days before the date you become eligible to retire. Contact OHR at 202-442-4080 for an application.

Contact OHR for deposit information.

Call OHR to find out how much you must deposit for your service contributions.

Service Contributions

Certain periods of non-DCPS system service, such as certain military service, service in another educational institution, and even certain leaves of absence can be "credited" under this plan. In other words, certain types of service can be applied to this plan, which can add to your retirement benefit. To find out what periods of service are eligible, see page 18.

Receiving Credit for Your Non-DCPS Service

You must have five years of DCPS service in order to be eligible to receive credit for non-DCPS service. If you want to receive credit for certain eligible periods of non-DCPS system work, you must make deposits to the retirement fund. The amount of your deposits is the amount that you would have paid through mandatory contributions if you had been working in the DCPS system, plus interest, for each year that you want credit. Military service does not require a deposit to be credited.

You may make your service contributions in one lump sum or in installment payments. **Installment payments must be completed within 100 months of signing up for installments.**

Your Contributions At-A-Glance

Your Retirement Benefit Contributions	
Mandatory Contributions	You contribute either 7% or 8% of your annual salary depending on your hire date. Based on the statutes, you contribute: • 7% if you were hired before November 16, 1996; ***or*** • 8% if you were hired on or after November 16, 1996
Voluntary Contributions	You may contribute up to an additional 10% of your annual salary, in increments of $25.
Service Contributions	You may be able to receive credit for certain periods of non-DCPS system service. In order to receive credit, you must deposit money into the retirement fund for the years and months you worked outside of the DCPS system.

Certain life events, such as marriage, divorce, taking a leave of absence, disability, leaving the DCPS system, returning to work before or after retirement, or death may affect your retirement benefit, as explained in this section.

If You Marry

If you marry before you retire, you should contact the **benefits administrator** and the Office of Human Resources (OHR). You may wish to change your **beneficiary** designation so that your new spouse will be eligible for a benefit from this plan if you die before you retire.

Your marital status may affect how you wish to receive your benefit. For retirement benefit payment options, see page 28.

If you are unmarried when you retire and later get married, you may change your retirement benefit payment election to either the reduced **annuity** with a maximum survivor annuity or the reduced annuity with a partial survivor annuity option. For more information about these options, see page 28. To make this change, you must file a signed election form with the Mayor within one year of the date of your marriage.

Once you've made this election, you may not change your form of retirement benefit payment again. If your spouse dies, your benefit will increase (for all future payments) to the amount it would have been if you had elected an unreduced annuity benefit.

If you move

If you move to a new address before you retire, contact OHR. If you move after you retire, write or fax the benefits administrator to update the address where your annuity statement and other important information is sent.

If You Divorce

If you divorce and you elected the survivor benefit, you will be refunded the amount you contributed toward the survivor benefit provided you do not have eligible children or a **Qualified Domestic Relations Order (QDRO)**. Your former spouse may receive a QDRO, which, if granted, may affect your retirement benefit.

Qualified Domestic Relations Order (QDRO)

In some cases, the plan may have to pay benefits to your **former spouse** if you divorce. This will depend on the terms of your divorce and what instructions are contained in an applicable QDRO issued after March 15, 1989. Your ex-spouse may be awarded all or a portion of your retirement benefit, a payment from your retirement benefit, or a survivor benefit (described on pages 24-27) if the plan receives a qualifying court order. To be acceptable, the QDRO must state:

- that your former spouse is entitled to a survivor benefit ***or*** that you must provide a survivor benefit for your former spouse;
- your former spouse's share of your benefit as a fixed-dollar amount or a percentage or fraction of a retirement benefit; ***and***
- whether your former spouse should receive payment directly from the Treasury Department (for benefits earned on or before June 30, 1997) or the District of Columbia (for benefits earned after June 30, 1997).

A QDRO can be accepted *after* you retire if it is based on the type of benefit payment you chose. (For information about the payment options that you may choose, see page 28.)

For example, if you are married at the time you retire and you chose to receive a reduced retirement benefit in order to provide an additional survivor benefit—and then you get divorced—a QDRO to continue the survivor benefit for your former spouse is acceptable. However, if you did not elect the survivor benefit when you retired, the QDRO cannot require you to provide an additional survivor benefit for your ex-spouse.

If your former spouse is receiving benefit payments from this plan but remarries before age 55, payment will stop. Your payments will be restored to the amount they would have been if there hadn't been a court order.

If the court order grants your former spouse full benefits, any beneficiary who may have otherwise received a benefit under the plan will not receive one.

If You Take a Leave of Absence

You can take up to six months of approved leave without pay each fiscal year and continue to participate in the plan. Authorized leave without pay may count toward determining your eligibility for retirement, as long as you make the mandatory contributions to the retirement fund.

If you take an authorized educational leave of absence with partial pay, you may receive service credit for the time you were on leave without making a service credit purchase beyond the 7% or 8% that is withheld from your partial pay.

If You Take a Leave of Absence to Work in a Teachers' Union

If you take leave without pay to serve as a full-time officer or employee of a teachers' union for the purpose of bargaining with the District of Columbia, you may elect to receive credit for that time. You must notify the D.C. Board of Education within 60 days after your leave begins and you must make the regular mandatory contributions to the D.C. Office of Finance and Treasury (OFT) through the Board of Education in the amount that would have been paid if you were actively working in the DCPS system.

If You Take a Leave of Absence to Work in a D.C. Public Charter School

If the Superintendent of Schools grants you a leave of absence without pay to accept a position in a District Public Charter School, you will be able to receive credit for that service. To receive credit, the public charter school must process your mandatory contributions and forward them to the D.C. OFT who transmits the funds to the D.C. Retirement Board. The contributions must be equal to the amount that you would have contributed if you hadn't taken a leave of absence.

If You Become Disabled

If you have five years of DCPS teaching service at the time you become totally and permanently disabled, you may be eligible for a disability retirement benefit through this plan. Disability retirement benefits are described on page 15.

For more information about applying for a disability retirement benefit, see page 36.

If you become disabled prior to earning five years of DCPS teaching service, you will be refunded your contributions in a lump sum payment. See page 11 for refund procedures.

If You Leave the DCPS System

If you resign or leave the DCPS system (for reasons other than retirement or authorized leaves of absence of less than six months) your membership in the retirement plan stops.

If you are eligible for a deferred retirement benefit (described on page 15), you will receive your retirement benefit when you reach age 62 as long as you elected the deferred retirement benefit when you left the DCPS system.

If you are not eligible for a deferred retirement benefit, you will receive a **lump sum refund** for the contributions you made to the retirement fund. In order to receive your lump sum refund, you must file an application immediately, but no later than 31 days before the date you become eligible to retire. Contact OHR at 202-442-4080 for an application.

Your refund includes:

- the mandatory contributions you made;
- any voluntary contributions you made, plus any interest that they've earned; and
- any amount you may have deposited to receive credited service.

If You Leave the DCPS System to Work in a D.C. Public Charter School

If you leave employment with the DCPS system and become an employee of a District of Columbia Public Charter School within 60 days of the date you leave the DCPS system, you may choose to stay in the Teachers' Retirement Plan and receive credit for your service in the charter school. To remain in the plan, you must make the same mandatory contributions to the retirement fund that you would have made if you remained a DCPS employee. You must elect to remain in the Teachers' Retirement Plan when you begin working at the public charter school.

If You Return to Work Before Retirement

If you are rehired, you may keep credit for the service you earned before and during your break in service.

- **If you received a refund** after leaving the DCPS system, you may regain your previous school service by depositing the money you received, plus interest, back into the retirement fund.
- **If you did not receive a refund** when you left the DCPS system, you will maintain the previous school service when you come back to work.

You receive credit for any creditable service that you earned during your break in service as long as you make the required deposit of mandatory contributions plus interest to the retirement fund when you return to work. You start earning credit again on the day you return to work.

Keep in touch!

If you experience a "life event" contact OHR (active teachers) or the benefits administrator (retirees).

If You Return to Work After Retirement

You are permitted to work while you're receiving your retirement benefit. There are certain limitations on the amount you can earn if:

- you take a disability retirement; or
- you become reemployed with the District of Columbia after you retire.

For information on earning restrictions while you're receiving a disability retirement benefit, see page 15.

If you become reemployed by the District of Columbia after you retire, you will continue to receive your annuity but your salary will be reduced to ensure that the sum of your retirement benefit and your salary do not exceed the salary otherwise payable for the position you hold.

FOR EXAMPLE:

Sue retires from teaching and receives an annuity of $30,000. She is later reemployed by the District in another position where she receives a salary of $50,000. Her present salary ($50,000) will be reduced by the amount of her annuity ($30,000) so that her salary for her job after retirement will be $20,000.

If you return to work in the DCPS system after you have retired, you cannot contribute to the retirement fund. Therefore, you will not receive any additional retirement benefit when you retire again.

Who are your eligible children?

Eligible children are your unmarried children (including adopted children, stepchildren or recognized natural children) who are:

- *under age 18;*
- *ages 18-22 if they are full-time students; or*
- *any age if they are physically or mentally disabled and are incapable of self-support. The disability must have occurred before he or she reached age 18 to qualify.*

If You Die

If you die, your survivor should contact the benefits administrator at 202-727-5851. The administrator will mail a checklist of forms that are required to set up a survivor benefit, if applicable.

If You Die Before Retirement

If you die before you retire, your beneficiary should contact OHR. He or she will receive your voluntary contributions (including interest) as a lump sum payment, provided you do not have an eligible spouse, child(ren), or dependent parent. Your eligible spouse and/or your eligible children or your dependent parents may be entitled to a survivor benefit through this plan if you had at least 18 months of service at the time of your death. See page 24 for more information.

If You Die After Retirement

If you die after you retire, your eligible children will receive a benefit through this plan. Your surviving spouse or your designated beneficiary may also be eligible for a benefit if you elected a reduced annuity with a survivor benefit option when you retired. See Retirement Benefit Payment Options on page 28 for more information.

If you elected a life insurance benefit when you retired to be paid to your beneficiary in the event of your death, your beneficiary will receive a lump sum payment of your life insurance benefit. See page 31 for more information.

When a Lump Sum Benefit is Payable to Your Survivors

When you die, your designated beneficiary will receive a lump sum refund for your remaining retirement contributions and deposits if you die:

- before completing 18 months of service with the DCPS system;
- without a spouse, child or dependent parent who is eligible for a survivor annuity;
- with at least one survivor, but your survivor loses his or her right to an annuity (i.e., your child no longer meets the plan's definition of an eligible child) before he or she applies for a survivor benefit; or
- after leaving the DCPS system before you are eligible to receive your deferred retirement benefit.

If you do not have a designated beneficiary, your benefit will be paid in the order of precedence described in the chart below.

Order of Payment

If the total of your retirement contributions and deposits are not paid to you before you die, and you have no survivors eligible for benefits, the balance remaining will be paid as a lump sum to an individual(s) in the order of precedence according to the chart below.

Order of Precedence for Survivor Benefits

1	Your benefit is paid to your beneficiary. You must have designated this beneficiary(ies) in a signed and witnessed statement received by the Mayor, prior to your death.
2	Your benefit is paid to your surviving spouse if he or she is not listed as your beneficiary.
3	Your benefit is paid to your surviving children. If they are not alive, the benefit will be paid to their children.
4	Your benefit is paid to your parents. If they are not alive, the benefit will be paid to your parents' survivor.
5	Your benefit is paid to the appointed executor or administrator of your estate.
6	Your benefit is paid to the next of kin that the Mayor determines is entitled to your benefit under the laws of the place you lived at the time of your death.

Designating a beneficiary

To designate a beneficiary, active DCPS teachers should contact OHR at 202-442-4080 for a change of beneficiary form. Retirees should contact OPRS at 202-727-5851 to change a beneficiary designation. The Mayor must have received your signed and witnessed designation before your death in order for the designation to be valid.

Types of Retirement Benefits

The chart below gives a brief description of the types of retirement benefits offered by the Teachers' Retirement Plan.

Retirement Benefits At-A-Glance

Voluntary Retirement Benefit	If you meet the age and service requirements (explained below), you may be eligible for a voluntary retirement benefit—a full basic retirement benefit.
Involuntary Retirement Benefit	If you meet the eligibility requirements and are involuntarily separated before retirement, you may be eligible for an involuntary retirement benefit.
Deferred Retirement Benefit	If you leave work before you are eligible to retire, you may be eligible for a deferred retirement benefit at age 62 if you have worked for at least five years as a DCPS teacher.
Disability Retirement Benefit	If you become disabled and cannot work, you may be eligible for a disability retirement benefit.

Each of these types of retirement benefits is described in more detail below.

When are you eligible to retire?

Make an appointment with a member of the Office of Human Resources staff to discuss your retirement eligibility.

Voluntary Retirement Benefit

You are eligible for a voluntary retirement benefit if you have at least five years of work as a DCPS teacher:

- at age 62;
- at age 60 if you have 20 years of service;
- at age 55 if you have 30 years of service, if you were hired before November 16, 1996; or
- for all teachers hired on or after November 16, 1996, at any age if you have 30 years of service.

Involuntary Retirement Benefit

You may qualify for an involuntary retirement benefit if you are involuntarily separated from service (unless the separation is for cause on charges of misconduct or delinquency). You are eligible for an involuntary retirement if you have:

- 25 years of service, including at least five years as a DCPS teacher; or
- 20 years of service if you are at least age 50, with a minimum of five years as a DCPS teacher.

If you are younger than age 55 on the date you retire with an involuntary retirement benefit, your benefit will be reduced. The reduction is 1/6 of 1% for each full month that you are under age 55 on the date you retire. So, if you are 15 months younger than 55 on the date you retire, the reduction would be 2.5% (1/6 of 1% X 15 months).

Deferred Retirement Benefit

If you leave the school system before you become eligible to retire, you may receive your retirement benefit when you reach age 62. This is called a "deferred retirement benefit." To be eligible, you must have five or more years as a DCPS teacher before you leave the DCPS system.

If you want to receive a deferred retirement benefit, you must elect it when you leave the DCPS. Otherwise, you may request a refund of the contributions that you've made to the retirement fund. See "If You Leave the DCPS System" on page 11 for more information.

Disability Retirement Benefit

If you become disabled, you may be eligible to retire with a disability retirement benefit. To be eligible you must have:

- at least five years as a DCPS teacher at the time you become disabled; and
- a physical or mental disability that prevents you from satisfactorily performing your job.

NOTE: You are not eligible for a disability retirement benefit if your disability is the result of willful misconduct or other specified factors.

If You Recover From Your Disability

If you recover from your disability before you meet the age and service requirements to retire, the Board of Education will appoint you to the first available position in the DCPS system that is equal or similar to your position before you became disabled.

Your disability benefit payments will stop on the date of your reappointment. If you refuse the position, you will not continue to receive disability benefit payments.

Earning Income While You Are Disabled

If in one calendar year you earn at least 80% of the **current rate of pay** for the teaching job you had before you retired from the DCPS system and you are not eligible for a voluntary retirement, your disability benefit payments will stop on the January 1 of the year after you earned the income through other work.

Your disability benefit payments will resume on January 1 of any year after a calendar year in which your earnings are less than 80% of the **current rate of pay** of the job you held before you retired.

FOR EXAMPLE:

Judy became disabled in 1998 and retired with a disability retirement benefit. In 1999, she found other employment and earned $40,000 in that calendar year. At that time, the current rate of pay for the teaching position Judy held in the DCPS system was $45,000. Because $40,000 is more than 80% of the current rate of pay for her former teaching salary, her disability benefit payments stopped beginning January 1, 2000.

However, during the 2000 calendar year, Judy earned $25,000. On January 1, 2001, her disability benefit payments were restored, because $25,000 is less than 80% of the current rate of pay for the position she held before she retired.

Important

If you leave the DCPS system and you do not elect the deferred retirement benefit, you can receive a refund of your retirement contributions. Contact OHR to request a refund or to elect the deferred retirement benefit.

If Your Disability Benefit Payments End

If your disability retirement benefit ends and you do not become reemployed by the DCPS system, you will be considered “separated” from service for reasons other than retirement. However, if you were also receiving a retirement benefit from your own voluntary contributions, those payments will continue.

For information on how to apply for a disability retirement benefit and continuing eligibility requirements, see page 36.

How Your Retirement Benefit is Calculated

Your years and months of service and your **average salary** are used to calculate your retirement benefit.

Your Average Salary

Your "average salary" is the average actual rate of pay you earned during 36 consecutive months of service when your pay was the highest. Since there can be a number of actual rates of pay during this 36 consecutive month period, each rate is "weighted" based on the time it was in effect. This means that if you were paid at a higher rate for seven months of the year than you were for the other five months of the year, your rate of pay for those seven months would have the most "weight" in calculating your average salary.

Note that summer school pay is not taken into account when determining your average salary.

The example below shows Sally's pay since she started teaching in the DCPS system in 1990. If she were to retire today, her average salary would be based on the years 1999-2001, because during those years she earned the highest salary of her career. For the purposes of making this example simple, let's assume that Sally only earned one rate of pay per year.

Year	Annual Salary
1990	$25,000
1991	$25,500
1992	$27,000
1993	$27,500
1994	$32,000
1995	$33,000
1996	$36,000
1997	$31,000
1998	$37,000
1999	$38,000
2000	$39,000
2001	$40,000
Average Salary:	$39,000

Highest earnings during 36 consecutive months.

Your Years of Service

Teaching Service

As long as you are making mandatory contributions to the retirement fund, you earn one year of teaching service for each academic year you work:

- in a salary class position ET 1-15 in the DCPS system under a temporary, probationary, or permanent appointment; and
- as an employee of a D.C. Public Charter School while you're on an approved leave of absence without pay from a teaching position with the DCPS system or if you separated from the DCPS system and within 60 days of the separation you become a D.C. Public Charter School employee and elect to remain in the D.C. Teachers' Retirement Plan.

Teaching service also includes up to six months of authorized leave without pay in any fiscal year. Authorized leave without pay is described on page 10.

Credited Service

You may be eligible to receive credit for certain non-DCPS work periods. This includes certain work in other school systems, educational leaves of absence, unused sick leave and service in the U.S. Armed Forces. Credited service is described in detail in the chart below.

Credited Service

Credit for Unused Sick Leave

Unused sick leave can be used to determine your years of service. For instance, if you have accumulated 22 days (176 hours) of sick leave, one month can be added to your years and months of service. However, unused sick leave cannot be used to determine your eligibility for retirement or for determining your average salary. You do not need to make a deposit to the retirement fund to receive credit for unused sick leave.

Credit for Work Outside of the DCPS System

You may receive teaching credit for the following non-DCPS system work periods:

- Up to 10 years of service in a public day school system or an equivalent school system outside of the DCPS system that is not in the District of Columbia.
- Your continuous temporary service with the DCPS system immediately before your probationary appointment.
- Certain other service in the D.C. or Federal governments that is creditable under the Federal Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) (but not service creditable only under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS)) as long as you are not receiving a retirement annuity for that service.
- Authorized leaves of absence without pay for educational purposes.

To receive credit for this type of work, you must:

- have at least five years of work as a DCPS teacher; and
- make contributions (plus interest) to the retirement fund for each year that you would like credit.

Your deposit amount is calculated as if you had worked in the DCPS system during that time, using as the basis for the contributions the average annual salary of the class to which you are appointed, plus interest.

FOR EXAMPLE:

Richard worked for 10 years (from 1985 to 1995) in the Maryland Public School System. Then in August 1996, he began working in the DCPS system. If he wants credit at retirement for the years he worked in Maryland, he will need to make contributions for those years at the rate of 7% of the average annual salary for a DCPS teacher from 1985 to 1995 working in the class he is appointed to, plus interest. He can then use those years of service to determine his eligibility for retirement and in calculating the amount of his retirement benefit.

You may make your contributions to the fund in one lump sum payment or in installments. Contact OHR for more information.

Credit for Service in the U.S. Armed Forces

You may be eligible to receive credited service for the period of time you served in the Armed Forces, as long as you received an honorable discharge. Eligible service in the Armed Forces includes the Coast Guard, but does not include service in the National Guard, unless you were ordered to active duty in the service of the United States. You do not need to make a deposit to the retirement fund to receive credit for service in the Armed Forces.

You will not receive credit for any time during which you receive a military pension, unless you are receiving the pension as a result of a service-connected disability.

Credit for Leave Without Pay to Work for a Teachers' Union

If you take leave without pay to serve as a full-time officer or employee of a teachers' union for the purpose of bargaining with the District of Columbia, you may choose to receive credit for that time.

To receive credit, you must notify the D.C. Board of Education within 60 days after your leave begins and you must make regular mandatory contributions to the retirement fund through the Board of Education. Your mandatory contributions are the same amount that you would have paid through mandatory contributions if you were working as a teacher.

Credit for Educational Leave of Absence

You can receive credit for an educational leave of absence with partial pay as long as it has been authorized by the Board of Education. You are not required to contribute beyond the 7% or 8% that is withheld from your partial pay.

Electing a survivor benefit reduces your retirement benefit

You may elect to provide a survivor benefit for your spouse or beneficiary, payable after you die. If you elect a survivor benefit, your monthly payments will be reduced. See page 24 for more information.

Calculating Your Voluntary Retirement Benefit

If you were hired **before November 16, 1996**, you will need to know your average salary and your years of service to calculate your voluntary retirement benefit.

1. Your average salary: ________________________
2. Your years of service:________________________

Step 1. Multiply your average salary by 1.5% (0.015) and then multiply by five, for your first five years of service. If you have fewer than five years of service, replace five with the number of years you have to date. If you have more than five years of service, you will also complete Step 2.

average salary	**X**	**1.5%**	**X**	**years of service (1 through 5)**	**=**	**$**

Step 2. Multiply your average salary by 1.75% (0.0175) and then multiply by the number of years of service you have between six and ten years. If you have more than ten years of service, you will also complete Step 3.

average salary	**X**	**1.75%**	**X**	**years of service (6 through 10)**	**=**	**$**

Step 3. Multiply your average salary by 2% (0.02) and then multiply by the number by the years of service you have beyond ten.

average salary	**X**	**2%**	**X**	**years of service over 10**	**=**	**$**

Step 4. Add together the totals from all three steps to determine your annual retirement benefit.

annual unreduced retirement benefit	**=**	**$**

FOR EXAMPLE:

Gina decides to retire at age 60. She has 25 years of service (including five years of teaching service) so she meets the eligibility requirements for a voluntary retirement benefit. Her average salary is $60,000. Her unreduced retirement benefit is calculated as follows:

1. *$60,000 X 1.5% X 5 years of service = $4,500 (for her first five years of service)*
2. *$60,000 X 1.75% X 5 years of service = $5,250 (for her next five years of service)*
3. *$60,000 X 2% X 15 years of service = $18,000 (for her final fifteen years of service)*
4. *$4,500 + $5,250 + $18,000 = $27,750 per year*

Gina's annual, unreduced voluntary retirement benefit is $27,750. Each month Gina will receive $2,313. (Monthly benefit amounts are rounded to the nearest dollar.)

If you were hired **on or after November 16, 1996**, your unreduced benefit is calculated as follows:

Multiply your years of service by 2% of your average salary.

average salary	**X**	**2%**	**X**	**years of service**	**=**	**$**

Calculating Your Involuntary Retirement Benefit

If you retire involuntarily, your benefit is calculated in the same way as a voluntary retirement benefit, however a reduction applies if you are younger than 55 when you retire. Your benefit will be reduced by 1/6th of 1% (which equals .00166) for each full month you are under age 55 at the time you leave the DCPS system.

FOR EXAMPLE:

Doug retires involuntarily at age 50 years and zero months. He has 23 years of service and his average salary is $50,000.

1. *$50,000 X 1.5% X 5 = $3,750 (for his first five years of service)*
2. *$50,000 X 1.75% X 5 = $4,375 (for his second five years of service)*
3. *$50,000 X 2% X 13 = $13,000 (for his last 13 years of service)*
4. *$3,750 + $4,375 + $13,000 = $21,125*
5. *Reduced by .00166 per month for 60 months (because Doug is 60 months younger than 55 by five years and zero months).*
   60 X .00166 = 10%. $21,125 X 0.10 = $2,112.50.
   Doug's annual benefit is reduced by $2,112.50.

Doug's reduced benefit is $21,125 - $2,112.50 = $19,013 per year rounded to the nearest dollar, or $1,584 per month.

Calculating Your Deferred Retirement Benefit

You calculate a deferred retirement benefit in the same way you calculate a voluntary retirement benefit. Your benefit is based on your average salary and your years of service at the time you leave the DCPS system.

Calculating Your Disability Benefit

If you are disabled (and you've worked as a DCPS teacher for at least five years) your retirement benefit will be based on your average salary and your years of service at the time you become disabled. The benefit is calculated in the same way as the voluntary retirement benefit. The plan provides a minimum disability benefit described on the next page.

Minimum Disability Benefit Allowable

The plan will not allow your disability benefit to fall below the "minimum." If your calculated disability benefit amount is less than the plan's minimum disability benefit, you will receive the minimum allowable benefit instead. The minimum disability benefit is the **lesser** of:

- OPTION A: 40% of your average salary; or
- OPTION B: The benefit you would receive using the average salary you earned at the time of your disability with service projected to age 60.

For example:

Elaine retires due to a disability at age 50. She has 15 years of service, including five years of DCPS service. Her average salary is $45,000. Elaine's benefit will be calculated in the same way as a voluntary retirement benefit, described on page 20.

1.) $45,000 X 1.5% X 5 (for her first five years of service) = $3,375
2.) $45,000 X 1.75% X 5 (for her next five years of service)= $3,937.50
3.) $45,000 X 2.0% X 5 (for her final five years of service)= $4,500
4.) $3,375 + $3,937.50 + $4,500 = $11,812.50 (rounded to the nearest dollar) = $11,813

Elaine's calculated disability retirement benefit would be $11,813. But, we must find out if this is lower than the plan's minimum allowable benefit.

OPTION A

To determine whether or not $11,813 is below the minimum amount, let's compare her calculated disability benefit to 40% of her average salary. Her average salary is $45,000. 40% of $45,000 is $18,000, which is greater than her actual disability retirement benefit.

OPTION B

Now, let's compare $18,000 to Elaine's projected benefit if she continued working to age 60. If Elaine worked to age 60, the third step in calculating her benefit would be: $45,000 X 2% X 15 (Since she is age 50 and the Option B calculation assumes that she would have worked until age 60, 10 more years of service are added to the calculation) which equals $13,500.
$3,375 + $3,937.50 + $13,500 = $20,813.

In this case, 40% of Elaine's average salary ($18,000) is the lesser of Option A and B, but it is greater than her calculated disability retirement benefit. Elaine would receive the minimum disability retirement benefit of $18,000 per year, or $1,500 per month.

NOTE: If you become disabled before you've worked for five years as a DCPS teacher, you will not receive a disability retirement benefit. Instead, you will receive a lump sum refund of the mandatory and voluntary contributions you've made to the plan.

Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs)

Increases in the cost of living, if any, are added to your retirement benefit annually. On the first day of each year, the Mayor determines the percentage of change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the previous calendar year. If you were hired on or after November 16, 1996, your cost of living adjustments cannot be greater than 3% per year by statute for you or for your survivors. For information on how COLAs are calculated, see "Cost of Living Adjustments" in the glossary.

Increases for cost of living adjustments apply to all retirement benefit payments except payments from your voluntary contributions. Cost of living adjustments also apply to benefits paid to survivors. COLAs are effective on March 1 and are included in benefits payments on April 1.

COLAs are added to your benefit each year.

You or your survivor will receive a COLA increase each year. Note that if you were hired on or after November 16, 1996, the maximum annual increase is 3%.

Survivor Benefits

The Teachers' Retirement Plan provides survivor benefits for your eligible family members in the event of your death.

If you die **before** you retire, your spouse and/or your eligible children or your eligible dependent parents will receive a benefit from this plan. See pages 46 and 47 for definitions of dependent parents and eligible children.

If you die **after** you retire, your eligible children will automatically receive a survivor benefit from this plan. In order for your spouse to receive a survivor benefit, you must elect to provide one when you apply for a retirement benefit. Forms of payment are described on page 28.

Survivor Benefits At-A-Glance

	For Your Spouse	For Your Eligible Children
If you die before you retire	automatic survivor benefit payable from this plan	automatic survivor benefit payable from this plan
If you die after you retire	**available only if you elect a survivor benefit when you retire**	automatic survivor benefit payable from this plan

Pre-Retirement Survivor Benefits

If you have worked as a DCPS teacher for at least 18 months at the time of your death, your spouse, eligible child(ren) or dependent parent(s) may be entitled to monthly survivor benefit payments. Eligibility requirements for your spouse are stated below. Eligibility requirements for your surviving children are explained in the Glossary of Terms under "Eligible Child." Payments begin on the day after your death and continue as long as your surviving family members live or remain eligible to receive benefits.

Benefits are calculated in different ways, depending on the number of surviving family members and their relationship to you.

If you die without a survivor who is eligible for an annuity, your beneficiary may be eligible for a lump sum refund for retirement contributions. (See page 13 and the glossary on page 47.)

Survivor Benefits for Your Spouse

If you die before you retire, your spouse is eligible to receive a survivor benefit. To be eligible, you must have been married to your spouse for at least two years at the time of your death, or your spouse must be the natural mother or father of your child.

In general, your spouse's survivor benefit is 55% of the amount of the benefit that you would have received when you were eligible to retire, based on your years of service and your average salary at the time of your death. This amount is paid in monthly installments.

For example:
Robert died before he retired. At the time of his death, his average salary was $60,000 and he had 23 years of service. The benefit he would have received is calculated in the same way as the voluntary retirement benefit:

1. $60,000 X 1.5% X 5 (for his first five years of service) = $4,500
+
2. $60,000 X 1.75% X 5 (for his next five years of service) = $5,250
+
3. $60,000 X 2% X 13 (for his last thirteen years of service) = $15,600
Robert's annual retirement benefit would have been $25,350.
Robert's spouse is eligible to receive 55% of his benefit, which is $13,943 per year.

Minimum Allowable Survivor Benefit

The plan will not allow your survivor's benefit to fall below the "minimum." The minimum survivor benefit is the **lesser** of:

- OPTION A: 55% of 40% of your average salary; or
- OPTION B: 55% of the amount your retirement benefit would have been if you had retired at age 60 under the voluntary retirement formula.

For example:
Sharon's average salary at the time of her death at age 59 is $40,000. Based on her 20 years of service and her average salary, her annuity benefit would be calculated in the same way as a voluntary retirement benefit:

1. $40,000 X 1.5 % X 5 = $3,000 (for her first five years of service)
2. $40,000 X 1.75% X 5 = $3,500 (for her next five years of service)
3. $40,000 X 2.0% X 10 = $8,000 (for her final 10 years of service)
4. $3,000 + $3,500 + $8,000 = $14,500

Sharon's calculated benefit would be $14,500. Her spouse is eligible to receive 55% of that amount, or $7,975 per year. But we must find out if this is lower than the plan's minimum benefit.

OPTION A
40% of Sharon's average salary ($40,000) = $16,000. $16,000 X 55% = $8,800

OPTION B
Sharon would have turned 60 in one year, so one year of service is added to her retirement calculation. $40,000 X 2% X 1= $800. That extra $800 is then added to her retirement benefit of $14,500, which equals $15,300. 55% X 15,300 = $8,415

The lesser of these two options is option B, $8,415. Since this is greater than the calculated amount of $7,975, Sharon's husband would receive an annual benefit of $8,415, or $701 per month.

Your surviving spouse will receive payments for his or her lifetime unless he or she remarries before reaching age 60. At that point, payments will stop. However, if your spouse's marriage ends because of annulment, divorce or death of his or her spouse, payments will resume from the date the marriage ended if:

- your surviving spouse chooses to receive the terminated survivor benefit from this plan instead of a survivor benefit from any other retirement program for Federal or District employees; and
- your surviving spouse repays any lump sum amount that was paid out when the survivor benefit ended.

Survivor Benefits for Your Eligible Children

Your eligible children may receive a survivor benefit, paid in monthly installments from this plan when you die before retiring.

If You Have Surviving Children and Have a Surviving Spouse

If you are survived by a spouse, each year, your eligible children will receive the **lesser** of:

- 60% of your average salary, divided by the number of eligible children; or
- \$5,076 (if you were hired before January 1, 1980) or \$4,896 (if you were hired on or after January 1, 1980) per child; or
- \$15,228 (if you were hired before January 1, 1980), or \$14,688 (if you were hired on or after January 1, 1980) divided by the number of eligible children.

NOTE: The above dollar amounts are as of March 1, 2002, and are increased annually by all future cost of living adjustments.

Your eligible children will continue to receive monthly payments until they no longer meet the plan's definition of an eligible child or they die, whichever happens first. The definition for an eligible child is on page 47.

When your spouse dies or when your child is no longer eligible, their portion of the survivor benefit will be paid to any other eligible child or children you may have. The survivor benefit is then recomputed and paid as though the remaining survivors were the only survivors when you died. This distribution is limited by the allowable benefit, because the plan requires that each child receive the **lesser** of the amounts listed above. This is illustrated in the example below.

FOR EXAMPLE:

Simon who was hired in 1985, had three children that were eligible for a survivor benefit when he died. The total survivor benefit of \$14,688 was distributed equally among the children, so each child received \$4,896 per year.

However, when Simon's oldest child reaches 18, she will no longer be considered an "eligible child," The \$14,688, when divided by the two remaining children equals \$7,344 per year. However, this amount exceeds the allowable benefit, as the plan requires that children receive the ***lesser*** *of the amounts listed above. Therefore, the two remaining children will each receive \$4,896.*

Notify the benefits administrator

If a survivor's status or eligibility for benefits changes, notify the benefits administrator.

If You Have Surviving Children But Do Not Have a Surviving Spouse

If you die **before** you retire and you do not have a surviving spouse, but you do have eligible surviving children, they will receive an annual benefit, paid in monthly installments. The benefit is the **lesser** of:

- 75% of your average salary, divided by the number of eligible children; or
- $6,180 (if you were hired before January 1, 1980) or $5,952 (if you were hired on or after January 1, 1980) per child; or
- $18,540 (if you were hired before January 1, 1980) divided by the number of eligible children, or $17,856 (if you were hired on or after January 1, 1980) divided by the number of eligible children.

This distribution is limited by the allowable benefit, because the plan requires that each child receive the **lesser** of the amounts listed above.

NOTE: The above dollar figures are as of March 1, 2002, and are increased by all future cost of living adjustments.

Survivor Benefits for Dependent Parents

If you die **before** you retire, your dependent parents may receive a survivor benefit if you do not have an eligible surviving spouse or eligible children at the time of your death. To qualify, your parents must have received at least 50% of their total income from you immediately before your death.

The survivor benefit for a dependent parent is calculated in the same way as a benefit for a spouse. Your parents will receive the benefit payment until they both die.

After-Retirement Survivor Benefits

Electing a Survivor Benefit for Your Spouse

When you retire, you may elect to take a reduced retirement benefit so that if you die before your spouse, your spouse will receive a survivor benefit. While pre-retirement survivor benefits are automatic upon your death, you must elect to provide a post-retirement benefit to be payable to your spouse.

There are several options available to you to provide a benefit for your spouse. See page 28 for a description of your choices.

Benefits for Your Eligible Children

Your eligible children will receive an automatic benefit from this plan when you die after you retire. You do not have to elect to provide a benefit for your children. Your children will receive the benefit whether or not you elected a survivor annuity for your spouse.

The benefit for your eligible children is the same as the pre-retirement survivor benefit explained on page 26. The amount your eligible children receive depends on whether or not your spouse survives you, and how many children are eligible for benefits.

Retirement Benefit Payment Options

Survivor benefits if you die before retirement

If you die before you retire, the plan provides a benefit for your spouse and your eligible children. *See page 24 for more information.*

When you apply for a retirement benefit, you choose whether you would like to provide a survivor annuity for your spouse or beneficiary. This benefit will be paid to your spouse or beneficiary if you die after you retire. Your options depend on whether you're married or single when you retire.

Retirement Benefit Payment Options

The following chart shows the options you may elect when you retire. You may only choose one option.

Option	Your Marital Status	Description	Who Can Receive The Survivor Annuity?
Unreduced Annuity Option	married or single	Full benefit paid to you upon retirement. Payments stop at your death. This option does **not** provide a survivor annuity.	no survivor annuity
Reduced Annuity with a Maximum Survivor Annuity*	married only	Reduced benefit paid to you so that upon your death, your spouse will receive 55% of the unreduced annuity you would have received under the option above.	your spouse only
Reduced Annuity with a Partial Survivor Annuity*	married only	Reduced benefit paid to you so that upon your death, your spouse will receive a partial annuity, designated by you, that can range from $1 up to any amount less than 55% of the unreduced annuity amount.	your spouse only
Reduced Annuity with a Life Insurance Benefit	married or single	Reduced benefit paid to you so that you can buy a life insurance policy that is payable in a lump sum to your beneficiary upon your death.	anyone you designate
Reduced Annuity with a Survivor Annuity to a Person with an Insurable Interest*	single only	Reduced benefit paid to you so that your designated survivor with an "insurable interest" will receive 55% of your reduced annuity upon your death.	someone who would reasonably be expected to need your financial support if you had lived

*These options allow your survivor(s) to continue healthcare coverage. In order for your survivor to continue your coverage after retirement, you must have had five years of continuous health self and family coverage prior to retirement. Your survivor must make premium payments. Note that any information on health or life insurance is for informational purposes only. Neither the Treasury Department nor the District of Columbia Retirement Board has responsibility or authority to administer your health or life insurance benefits. See page 45 to find out who you should contact for more information.

Unreduced Annuity Option

When you retire, you may choose to receive your retirement benefit as an "unreduced annuity." This means that your full retirement benefit will be paid out to you in monthly installments until you die. To figure out the amount of your benefit, see page 20.

If you are married and you elect the unreduced annuity, your spouse will not be eligible for a survivor benefit and will not be permitted to continue health benefits coverage under your health insurance after your death. Your eligible children will be entitled to receive survivor benefits as long as they remain eligible.

Reduced Annuity with a Maximum Survivor Annuity

If you are married when you retire, you may choose to receive your retirement benefit as a "reduced annuity with a maximum survivor annuity." This option pays you a reduced retirement benefit for your lifetime. If you die before your spouse, your spouse will receive 55% of the amount that you would have received if you had chosen the **unreduced** annuity option. The reduction to your benefit is calculated by subtracting a percentage of your unreduced annuity, as shown below:

2.5% of your retirement benefit up to $3,600	+	10% of your retirement benefit amount over $3,600

FOR EXAMPLE:

Nick's unreduced annuity equals $20,000. The reduced annuity would be:

2.5% of the first $3,600 = $90

+

10% of the remainder, which is $1,640

$20,000 - $3,600 = $16,400. 10% of $16,400 = $1,640

$90 + $1,640 = $1,730

$20,000 - $1,730 = $18,270

*Therefore, Nick's reduced annual benefit would equal $18,270. His spouse's benefit would be 55% of the **unreduced** annuity ($20,000) or $11,000 per year.*

Once you elect a reduced annuity, you may not change your election as long as you remain married.

Survivor benefits for your children

Even if you elect the unreduced annuity option, your eligible children will be entitled to survivor benefits, as described on page 26.

Reduced Annuity with a Partial Survivor Annuity

If you are married when you retire, you may choose to receive your retirement benefit as a "reduced annuity with a partial survivor annuity." With this option, you will receive a reduced retirement benefit for your lifetime. If you die before your spouse, your spouse will receive a benefit that is less than the maximum survivor annuity. You decide the amount of your spouse's benefit. The reduced annuity is calculated as shown below:

1. Take the annual survivor annuity you have chosen for your spouse and divide that amount by 55%.
2. Take up to the first $3,600 of this amount and multiply by 2.5%.
3. Then take the remaining amount over $3,600 and multiply it by 10%.
4. Add the amounts from steps 2 and 3 to determine the amount of reduction to your annuity.

Electing a Percentage or a Dollar Amount

When you retire, you may choose a percentage of your retirement benefit or a specific dollar amount as a survivor benefit for your spouse. The partial benefit can range from $1 up to any amount less than the maximum survivor annuity (or 55% of what your unreduced annuity would be).

FOR EXAMPLE:

Jan's unreduced retirement benefit is $20,000. She wants to provide a partial survivor annuity for her husband. Her election must be less than the maximum survivor annuity of 55% of her unreduced retirement benefit, so it must be less than $11,000.

Jan decides to elect 50% of her unreduced benefit as a partial survivor annuity for her husband. That means that Jan's husband will receive $10,000 (the survivor annuity) per year if Jan dies before he does. To provide this benefit, Jan's annuity is reduced as follows:

$10,000 (the annual survivor benefit) ÷ 55% = $18,181.82

2.5% of the first $3,600 = $90
The remaining amount over $3,600 is $14,581.82. ($18,181.82 - $3,600 = $14,581.82)
10% of $14,581.82 = $1,458.18
The annuity is reduced by $90 + $1,458.18 = $1,548.18

Jan's reduced annuity would be $20,000 - $1,548.18 = $18,452.

If Jan elected to provide a dollar amount instead of a percentage for her spouse, the reduction is calculated the same way. If Jan elects a $5,000 per year survivor benefit for her spouse, her annuity is reduced as follows:

$5,000 (the annual survivor benefit) ÷ 55% = $9,090.90
2.5% of the first $3,600 = $90
The remaining amount over $3,600 is $5,490.90 ($9,090.90 - $3,600 = $5,490.90)
+
10% of $5,490.90 = $549.09
$90 + $549 = $639
Jan's reduced annuity would be $20,000 - $639 = $19,361.

Once you elect a reduced annuity, you may not change your election as long as you're married.

If You Remarry After Retirement

If you elected a reduced annuity with a maximum or partial survivor annuity and your spouse dies or you divorce, your annuity will increase to the unreduced benefit amount for future payments. If you remarry, you will have the opportunity to elect one of the reduced annuities to provide a survivor benefit for your new spouse if:

- you and your new spouse were married for at least two years immediately before your death or your spouse is the parent of a child from the marriage; and
- your new spouse chooses to receive the survivor annuity instead of any other survivor benefit that is payable from another retirement system for Federal or District employees.

NOTE: If your former spouse obtains a Qualified Domestic Relations Order (QDRO), he or she may have rights to a survivor annuity benefit that may have an impact on entitlement to a survivor annuity for a subsequent spouse. See page 9 for more information.

Reduced Annuity with Life Insurance Benefit

You may choose to reduce your annuity and use the extra money to buy a life insurance policy. The life insurance benefit will be payable to your designated beneficiary in a lump sum when you die.

You may elect the amount of your insurance policy, however, the face value cannot be more than the amount of your contributions (including interest) that have accumulated at the time you retire. If your chosen beneficiary is not alive at the time of your death, the life insurance benefit will be paid according to the order of precedence shown in the chart on page 13.

Converting Your Insurance Policy

Once you elect a reduced annuity with life insurance, you may not change this election. However, you may convert the value of the life insurance to an additional annuity of equal value on any anniversary of your retirement date until you reach age 70.

Continuing Health Benefits

If you elect the reduced annuity with life insurance benefit option, your survivors are **not** eligible to continue health benefits coverage after your death.

Reduced Annuity with a Survivor Annuity to a Person with an "Insurable Interest"

You may choose to receive your retirement benefit as a reduced annuity with a survivor annuity to a person with an "insurable interest." This option provides a benefit for someone who you expect will be financially dependent on you during your retirement. When you die, the person who has an insurable interest will receive a survivor annuity. You must designate this person in writing.

To elect the insurable interest option, you must be:

- unmarried; and
- in good health. You must pass a physical exam under the direction of the D.C. Department of Human Services.

The survivor annuity begins the day after your death and continues until the survivor annuitant dies.

If the person with an insurable interest dies before you do, your annuity will be increased to the amount of the unreduced annuity option benefit for all future payments. You must notify the benefits administrator and provide your beneficiary's death certificate to reclaim your full annuity.

Calculating Your Benefit Reduction

The amount of your retirement benefit reduction is based on the age of the person you designate as having an insurable interest, as shown in the chart below.

If the person with an insurable interest is...	Your annuity is reduced to...
• the same age as you are; • older than you are; or • less than five years younger than you are	90% of the unreduced annuity option
• at least five but less than 10 years younger than you are	85% of the unreduced annuity option
• at least 10 but less than 15 years younger than you are	80% of the unreduced annuity option
• least 15 but less than 20 years younger than you are	75% of the unreduced annuity option
• at least 20 but less than 25 years younger than you are	70% of the unreduced annuity option
• 25 years or more younger than you are	60% of the unreduced annuity option

Amount of the Benefit

Your beneficiary will receive a benefit of 55% of the **reduced** annuity that you were receiving before your death.

For example:

Jane's unreduced retirement benefit is $25,000 per year. She chose to receive a reduced retirement benefit with a survivor annuity to a person with an insurable interest because her sister, Amy, lives with her and relies on her for financial support. Amy is 7 years younger than Jane is, so Jane's annuity is reduced to 85%—$21,250. When Jane dies, Amy will receive 55% of the reduced amount—$11,688 per year.

Continuing Health Benefits

The person with an insurable interest may be able to continue health benefits coverage. See page 45 to find out who to contact for more information.

Changing a Survivor Election

Generally, you may not change the payment option you elect. However, if you are single at the time you retire and you later get married, you may change your election. You may change your election to either:

- the reduced annuity with a maximum survivor annuity; or
- the reduced annuity with a partial survivor annuity.

To elect one of these, you must file a signed election form with the Mayor within one year of the date of your marriage. Any option you may have elected before your marriage, such as the life insurance option or an insurable interest survivor annuity option, will become void when you choose the reduced annuity with maximum or partial survivor annuity.

Your reduced annuity will become effective on the first business day of the month after the date your election is filed.

Unpaid retirement benefits

If a person receiving an annuity benefit dies before the total monthly amount has been paid, the remainder, called the unpaid annuity, will be paid according to the order of precedence described in the chart on page 13. For example, when a person dies in the middle of the month, the amount payable from the first of the month to the day of death is the unpaid annuity, and will be paid according to the order of precedence on page 13.

When your benefit is payable

Your retirement benefits are payable on the first business day of the month. For example, the January benefit is paid on the first business day of February.

How Benefits Are Paid

When you retire, you will receive your retirement benefit in monthly installments on the first business day of each month. You may have a check mailed to your home, or you may choose to receive your payments through direct deposit. Contact OHR at 202-442-4080 for more information.

If Your Spouse Dies Before You Do

If you elect a maximum survivor annuity or partial survivor annuity and your spouse dies before you do, your retirement benefit annuity payments will be increased (for future payments) after your spouse's death to the amount they would have been if you had elected the unreduced annuity option. You must notify the benefits administrator and provide your spouse's death certificate to reclaim your full annuity.

Continuing Health Benefits

If you choose either the maximum survivor annuity or the partial survivor annuity when you retire, your spouse may continue health benefits* coverage under your health insurance when you die if:

- you have at least five years of continuous health benefits coverage;
- you elected self and family coverage before your death; and
- your surviving spouse continues to make premium payments through deductions from his or her survivor annuity payments and/or by making direct payments.

If you have a question about health insurance, see page 45 for information about who to contact.

*Any information on health or life insurance is for informational purposes only. Neither the Treasury Department nor the District of Columbia Retirement Board has responsibility or authority to administer your health or life insurance benefits. See the Contact Information on page 45 for more information.

Applying For Your Retirement or Survivor Benefit

You will not automatically begin receiving retirement benefits—you must apply for your benefits through the Office of Human Resources (OHR) of the District of Columbia Public Schools. When you go to the office you'll receive the necessary forms and information about payment options and estimated benefits. Return the completed forms, with any supporting material, to OHR.

Timetable to Apply for Benefits

What You Should Do:	Your Timeframe:
Contact OHR with an approximate date of your retirement to make an appointment	Six months before your anticipated retirement date
Request an annuity estimate	Three to six months before your anticipated retirement date
Submit your application	30 days before your anticipated retirement date
Receive your first annuity payment	31 to 60 days from the date the benefits administrator receives your retirement package from OHR

Once your application has been accepted, it will take between 31 and 60 days after the benefits administrator receives your retirement package to receive your first annuity payment. If you received your salary by direct deposit, your annuity payments will also be made through direct deposit to the same financial institution.

Checks are dated the first business day of the month and are mailed so that you receive them shortly after that date. If you receive your annuity payments through direct deposit, your annuity payment will be deposited on the first business day of the month and the money is available on the same day. You are encouraged to sign up for direct deposit. It is a more secure and reliable method of payment and your money gets to your bank sooner.

Payments are effective the day after you retire and will continue until your death.

Receiving Your Voluntary Contributions

If you've made voluntary contributions (see page 7) to the retirement fund, you choose how you'd like to receive your voluntary contributions when you retire. You may:

- receive a lump sum payment of your contributions, including the interest they may have earned; or
- buy an additional retirement benefit, as long as you have worked at least five years as a DCPS teacher.

If you have questions about voluntary contributions, contact OHR at 202-442-4080.

Changing your direct deposit information

Once you're receiving a benefit you can change your direct deposit information. Contact the benefits administrator for a "Change of Direct Deposit" form. You must complete and sign the form and mail it back to the benefits administrator. You may need to contact your bank for information. For the address, phone and fax number of the benefits administrator, see page 45.

Applying for a Disability Retirement Benefit

You can apply for a disability retirement benefit, or the Board of Education may order you to retire for disability.

To apply for a disability retirement benefit, you must submit an application to the Board of Education before you leave the DCPS system, or within six months of leaving the DCPS system.

Before your application for a disability retirement benefit can be accepted, you must have an examination under the direction of the District designated medical examiner of DCPS and you must be found to be physically or mentally incapacitated. If your disability is not permanent, you must be re-examined each year until you reach the age that would qualify you for a voluntary retirement benefit.

The Board of Education may order you to have a medical exam as often as it finds necessary to confirm your continuing disability. If you do not appear for a required examination, your retirement benefit will be suspended until your disability is determined or until you become eligible for a deferred retirement benefit (see page 15).

You must submit your completed forms to OHR with a statement from your doctor verifying your disability. OHR will send your application and doctor's statement to the medical examiner for the District of Columbia. That doctor will either call you in for an additional examination or approve your application based on your doctor's statement.

The Board of Education will review your application and send a request for Disability Retirement to the Washington Occupational Health Center (WOHC). WOHC will provide the final determination on your Disability Retirement. If approved, OHR will send the approved application to the benefits administrator.

Disability Benefit Payments

The effective date of your disability retirement is the day after you stop being paid for work as a DCPS teacher. You will continue to receive payments until:

- you recover from your disability (if you recover before you are eligible for a voluntary retirement benefit);
- you earn more than 80% of the current salary for the position you held before you retired; or
- you die.

If you are receiving disability retirement payments and you have not reached retirement age, you must notify the benefits administrator immediately if, in a calendar year, you earned 80% or more of the current salary for the position you held before retirement.

Your disability retirement benefit payments will be restored on the first day of a calendar year following a calendar year during which you earned from wages and self-employment less than 80% of the current salary for the position you held before you retired.

If you recover from a disability before retirement age, you will be reappointed to a position equal or similar to any position with the D.C. public schools that you occupied before retirement. If you refuse this appointment, your disability retirement benefit will be terminated and you will receive a deferred retirement benefit when you reach age 62.

Applying for Survivor Benefits

Your survivor must apply for a survivor benefit. If you are retired at the time of your death, your survivor must contact the benefits administrator. If you are not retired at the time of your death, your survivor must contact OHR.

If You Die During Active Service

To receive a survivor benefit—payable if you die during active service—your survivor must submit a complete death benefits claim form (available through OHR) and provide the form, a copy of your death certificate, and proof of eligibility to OHR. OHR will then forward your application and supporting documents to the benefits administrator for processing.

If You Die After You Retire

If you die after you retire, your eligible surviving spouse and eligible children must complete a death benefits claim form and submit your death certificate and proof of eligibility (such as a marriage certificate) along with other supporting documents, to the benefits administrator. The benefits administrator will process the application and start payments once they determine that your survivor(s) or beneficiary is eligible. Some payments that are received after the retiree's date of death must be returned to the benefits administrator before a survivor can receive payments of their own.

If Your Claim is Denied (For Benefits Earned On or Before June 30, 1997—Federal Benefit)

The following procedures for a denied claim for a retirement benefit apply to those who receive payments from the Federal Retirement Fund. For information about claims and appeal procedures from the District Retirement Fund, see page 38.

If your claim for a retirement benefit is denied in whole or in part, the benefits administrator will notify you in writing. The notice will advise you of your right to request reconsideration of the denial and the time limits for doing so. You must submit your request for reconsideration to the benefits administrator in writing within 60 days from the date of the denial. Your request must include:

- your name;
- your address;
- your date of birth;
- the claim number (if applicable); and
- a statement of the basis for the request.

If the benefits administrator denies your request for reconsideration, the decision must:

- be in writing;
- provide adequate notice of the denial, explaining the specific reason for the denial in an easy-to-understand manner; and

- provide notice of your right to appeal the benefit administrator's decision to the Treasury Department, the address where the appeal must be submitted, and state that the appeal must be received by the Treasury Department within 60 days from the date of the reconsideration decision.

If you submit an appeal to the Treasury Department, your appeal must include the same information as your original request for reconsideration. The Treasury Department must receive the appeal within 60 days from the date of the reconsideration decision.

The Treasury Department's final decision on the appeal must be in writing and must fully set forth the Treasury Department's findings and conclusions on the appeal, and must contain notice of the right to judicial review of the decision.

Judicial Review

An individual whose claim has been denied (in whole or in part) by the Treasury Department in a final decision may file a civil action in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. The action must be filed within 180 days of the date of the final decision from the Treasury Department.

If Your Claim is Denied (For Benefits Earned After June 30, 1997—District Benefit)

If your claim for retirement benefits earned after June 30, 1997 is denied in whole or in part, you will receive a written notice of the denial from the District of Columbia within a reasonable amount of time after you file your claim, generally 90 days. The notice of denial will include:

- the specific reasons for the denial;
- the provisions of the applicable statute, regulations or fund procedures on which the denial is based; and
- an explanation of the steps you can take to submit a claim for review.

You have the right to a full and fair review of a claim that has been denied. This includes the right to review relevant documents. To obtain a review, you must submit a written request to the Mayor within 60 days after the denial, stating the basis for your request. The Mayor has 90 days to decide but may take as long as 120 days if notice is provided to the claimant. The decision on review must be in writing, include specific reasons for the denial and provide references to the laws, regulations or procedures on which the denial is based.

Judicial Review

You have the right to file an action in the District of Columbia Court of Appeals to obtain a review of the final decision on your request for review.

Continuing Your Health Benefits and Life Insurance Coverage

If you have had five years of continuous health and life insurance* coverage before you retire, you may continue your coverage for health benefits and life insurance benefits when you retire. Your surviving spouse may also be able to continue health benefits under certain circumstances when you die, provided you elected a retirement benefit that offers this option at the time you retire. For information about health and life insurance, contact one of the following offices:

- **If you were hired prior to October 1, 1987**, contact the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Retirement Information Office for questions about health and life insurance at 724-794-2005.
- **If you were hired after October 1, 1987 and you haven't retired**, contact OHR at 202-442-4080.
- **If you are a retiree and you were hired after October 1, 1987**, contact OPRS at 202-727-5851.

Life Insurance Beneficiary

For information or to change your life insurance beneficiary, contact one of the following offices:

- **If you are an active teacher**, your beneficiary is on file at the OHR. To change your beneficiary, you may contact OHR by calling 202-442-4080.
- **If you are a retired teacher and you were hired prior to October 1, 1987**, your beneficiary designation is on file at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). You may contact OPM at 724-794-2005.
- **If you are a retired teacher and you were hired after October 1, 1987,** your beneficiary designation is on file at the OPRS. You may contact OPRS at 202-727-5851.

*Any information on health or life insurance is for informational purposes only. Neither the Treasury Department nor the District of Columbia Retirement Board has responsibility or authority to administer your health or life insurance benefits. See the Contact Information on page 45 for more information.

Refunds

In certain situations you, your survivor, or your designated beneficiary may be entitled to a refund of contributions made to the Retirement Plan. For information regarding refunds, please see the following sections in this booklet: “When a Lump Sum is Payable to Your Survivors” on page 13; “If You Leave the DCPS System” on page 11; and the definition of “Lump Sum Refund for Retirement Contributions” on page 47.

Temporary Amendments

The D.C. Council and Congress have, from time to time, enacted legislation modifying retirement benefits on a temporary basis. These legislative changes provided eligibility windows that expired after specifically defined periods. Past legislative enactments have provided, for example, such temporary benefit changes as early-out retirements. For information about temporary changes you should contact your personnel office.

Administrative Information

The Teachers' Retirement Plan is administered by both the District of Columbia and the Treasury Department as described in Title XI of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, Pub. L. 105-33, as amended.

The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 required the Secretary of the Treasury to assume certain responsibilities for the District of Columbia Retirement System, including funding and making benefit payments earned before July 1, 1997. The Treasury Department Office of D.C. Pensions administers the Secretary's responsibilities under the Act.

Benefits earned after June 30, 1997 are administered by the District of Columbia Government, through the Office of Pay and Retirement Services (OPRS). OPRS, within the D.C. Office of the Chief Financial Officer, receives applications for retirement benefits from all active plan participants and survivors and carries out the day to day processing of retirement benefits.

The current benefits administrator for both the District Retirement Fund and Federal Retirement Fund is the Office of Pay and Retirement Services (OPRS).

A Little History About the Retirement Fund

	The District Retirement Fund After June 30, 1997	The Federal Retirement Fund Before July 1, 1997
Retirement Benefit Payments	For your work as a teacher after June 30, 1997, your retirement benefit is paid from the District Retirement Fund.	For your work as a teacher before July 1, 1997, your retirement benefit is paid from the Federal Retirement Fund.
Employee contributions and service deposits	Your contributions and service deposits go into the District Retirement Fund.	Your contributions and service deposits made before July 1, 1997 were transferred into the Federal Retirement Fund.
Retirement Plan Funding	The D.C. Government makes contributions into the District Retirement Fund.	The D.C. and the Federal governments made contributions into the Fund prior to October 1, 1997. The Treasury Department makes contributions into the Federal Retirement Fund starting October 1, 1997.

The District of Columbia Retirement Board

The District of Columbia Retirement Reform Act created the District of Columbia Retirement Board as an independent agency with exclusive authority and discretion to manage and control the retirement funds for District teachers, police officers and firefighters. The Retirement Board has 12 members:

- Six elected members—one retired and one active representative from the D.C. Police Force, the D.C. Fire Department and the DCPS system;
- Three appointed by the District of Columbia Council;
- Three appointed by the Mayor; and
- A non-voting ex officio member.

The names of the Retirement Board members as of July 1, 2002 are on the inside front cover of this booklet.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who should I call if I have a question about my Retirement Plan?

If you are an active teacher, you should contact the Office of Human Resources (OHR) at 202-442-4080. The address is:
D.C. Public Schools Office of Human Resources
825 North Capitol Street, N.E., 6th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20002

If you are a retiree, you should contact the benefits administrator, the Office of Pay and Retirement Services (OPRS) at 202-727-5851 from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM ET, Monday through Friday. The OPRS toll free phone number is 1-800-638-6182 if you are calling from outside the Metro area. The fax number is 202-724-2143. The address is:
OPRS
410 E Street, N.W., Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20001-2725

2. How much do I have to pay for my retirement benefit?

You contribute 7% of your annual salary to the retirement fund if you were hired *before* November 16, 1996. You contribute 8% of your annual salary to the retirement fund if you were hired *on* or *after* November 16, 1996.

3. Do I have to pay for a survivor benefit for my spouse and/or eligible children?

If you die before you retire, your surviving spouse and eligible children will automatically receive a benefit from this plan. You do not have to pay for this benefit.

For teachers who die after retirement, the survivor annuity is based on the election that the retiree made upon retirement. The teacher had three different options for determining how much of the annuity would be set aside for you.

- Unreduced Life Annuity: There are no survivor benefits;
- Reduced Annuity with Maximum Survivor Annuity: 55% of the unreduced annuity is paid to the survivor; or
- Reduced Annuity with Partial Survivor Annuity: The retiree elected an amount that would be paid to the surviving spouse—not to exceed 54% of the unreduced annuity. See page 28 for more information.

4. How is my retirement benefit calculated?

Your retirement benefit is calculated based on your age, your years and months of service, your average salary, the type of retirement you elect, the payment option you choose, and whether you've made voluntary contributions to the retirement fund. If you meet the eligibility requirements for a voluntary retirement, the calculation for an unreduced annuity for DCPS teachers hired before November 16, 1996 is:

Your average salary X 1.5% X 5 (for your first five years of service)

+

Your average salary X 1.75% X the number of years of service beyond five but before 10

+

Your average salary X 2.0% X the number of years of service you have beyond 10

=

The amount of your annual unreduced retirement benefit.

If you were hired on or after November 16, 1996, the formula is:
Your average salary X 2.0% X years of service
See page 20 for more information.

5. What's the difference between DCPS teaching service and credited service?

Teaching service refers to your years working for the DCPS system. Credited service refers to certain other periods of work that can be applied to this plan to use in determining your eligibility for a benefit. See page 18 and the glossary for more information.

6. Am I eligible to retire?

To discuss your eligibility for retirement, you should contact OHR staff to make an appointment.

7. Can I get an estimate of my retirement benefit?

Yes. Contact OHR to receive an estimate of your annuity.

8. Can I have my payments directly deposited into my bank account?

Yes. Contact the benefits administrator for a Direct Deposit form. Complete and sign the form, and return it to the benefits administrator.

9. When will I receive my first benefit payment?

It usually takes between 31 and 60 days after the benefits administrator receives your retirement package from OHR before you will receive your first payment. Your first payment will be retroactive to cover the entire time you've been retired before you receive your first payment. Checks (or direct deposits) are sent monthly.

10. Can I continue my health and life insurance benefits when I retire?

Yes, if you have had five years of continuous life and health insurance coverage immediately prior to your retirement and you continue to pay the premiums. For information, contact the one of the following offices:

- **If you were hired prior to October 1, 1987**, contact the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Retirement Information Office for questions about health and life insurance at 724-794-2005.
- **If you were hired after October 1, 1987 and you haven't retired**, contact OHR at 202-442-4080.
- **If you are a retiree and you were hired after October 1, 1987**, contact OPRS at 202-727-5851.

11. Will I receive a cost of living increase?

Yes. Annual increases are reflected in your April 1 annuity payment, based on the change in the Consumer Price Index for the previous calendar year.

12. Who is my beneficiary for my life insurance?

- **If you are an active teacher,** your beneficiary is on file at the OHR. To change your beneficiary, you may contact OHR by calling 202-442-4080.
- **If you are a retired teacher and you were hired prior to October 1, 1987**, your beneficiary designation is on file at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). You may contact OPM at 724-794-2005.
- **If you are a retired teacher and you were hired after October 1, 1987,** your beneficiary designation is on file at the OPRS. You may contact OPRS at 202-727-5851.

Frequently Asked Questions for Survivors

13. Where do I report a death?

Contact the benefits administrator. The benefits administrator will send you a checklist of forms that are required to set up a survivor for an annuity. Some payments that are received after the retiree's date of death must be returned to the benefits administrator before you can receive payments of your own.

14. What will my benefit be as the surviving spouse?

The benefit for a surviving spouse is calculated in different ways depending on whether the teacher dies before or after retiring.

For teachers who die before retirement, the survivor benefit will be equal to the greater of 55% of the annuity the teacher would have received using the teacher's average salary and years of service at the time of death or a minimum amount established by law. See page 24 for more details and eligibility requirements.

For teachers who die after retirement, the survivor annuity is based on the election that the retiree made upon retirement. The teacher had three different options for determining how much of the annuity would be set aside for you.

- Unreduced Life Annuity: There are no survivor benefits;
- Reduced Annuity with Maximum Survivor Annuity: 55% of the unreduced annuity is paid to the survivor; or
- Reduced Annuity with Partial Survivor Annuity: The retiree elected an amount that would be paid to the surviving spouse—not to exceed 54% of the unreduced annuity. See page 28 for more information.

15. How long can a surviving spouse receive the survivor benefit?

A surviving spouse is eligible to receive a survivor benefit for his or her lifetime unless he or she remarries before reaching age 60.

16. How long can an eligible child survivor receive a survivor benefit?

An eligible child survivor will receive a survivor benefit until the earliest of the following occurs:

- the child dies;
- the child marries; or
- the child turns 18, or if a full-time student, age 22 or 23, depending on date of birth.

If the child is a full-time student, the child and the academic institution must complete a Student Certification Form (available from the benefits administrator) every semester. If the student remains in school, he or she can continue to receive an annuity up to the age of 22.

Payments to an unmarried child who is incapable of self-support because of a mental or physical disability that occurred before age 18 will end when he or she marries, recovers from the disability, or dies—whichever occurs first.

Contact Information

The benefits administrator is available to answer your questions Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM ET. Below are some other phone numbers and addresses for more specific information.

Contact		Address/Phone Number
Office of Pay and Retirement Services (OPRS)/Office of the Chief Financial Officer	For Retirees: For questions about your plan or for reconsideration of a benefit calculation For questions about service deposits	Office of the Chief Financial Officer Office of Pay and Retirement Services 410 E Street, N.W., Suite 200 Washington, D.C. 20001-2725 202-727-5851 or 1-800-638-6182 Fax: 202-724-2143
DCPS System Office of Human Resources (OHR)	For Active Teachers: • To apply for retirement benefits • For information about direct deposit of benefit payments • To designate a beneficiary	D.C. Public Schools Office of Human Resources 825 North Capitol St., N.E. 6th Floor Washington, D.C. 20002 202-442-4080
The District of Columbia Retirement Board	For questions about the investments of the Retirement Trust Fund or to receive a copy of the Summary Plan Description	The District of Columbia Retirement Board 1400 L Street, N.W. Suite 300 Washington, D.C. 20005 202-535-1271 Fax: 202-535-1414
Board of Education		District of Columbia Public Schools Board of Education 825 North Capitol Street, N.E. 9th Floor Washington, D.C. 20002 202-442-4289
Office of D.C. Pensions Department of the Treasury	To appeal a denial of a request for reconsideration of benefits	Office of D.C. Pensions Department of the Treasury Metropolitan Square, 6th Floor 1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20220 202-622-0800
Office of Personnel Management (OPM)	For forms and for information about life and health insurance For retirees hired before October 1, 1987, to designate a beneficiary	The U.S. Office of Personnel Management Retirement Operations Center P.O. Box 45 Boyers, PA 16017-0001 724-794-2005 www.opm.gov
Washington Teachers' Union	For information about the current collective bargaining agreement that describes benefits under the plan	Washington Teachers' Union 1717 K Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036 202-293-8600

Glossary of Terms

Annual Salary means the total annual income you receive during the fiscal year for your work in the public day school system (not including summer schools) of the District of Columbia, including:

- your basic salary;
- any automatic increases you have received; and
- longevity allowances, provided for in the District of Columbia Teachers Salary Act of 1945, as amended.

Annuity means your annual retirement benefit, paid monthly. As the recipient of this benefit, you (or your survivor) are called an "annuitant."

Average Salary means the highest annual rate of pay resulting from averaging, over any period of 36 consecutive months of teaching service, your rates of annual salary in effect during those 36 consecutive months, with each rate weighted by the time it was in effect.

Benefits Administrator refers to the current administrator, the Office of Pay and Retirement Services (OPRS). The benefits administrator is responsible for administering benefits earned from both the District Retirement Fund and the Federal Retirement Fund.

Beneficiary refers to the person or persons you designate in a signed and witnessed statement to be eligible for benefit payments that are due to you at the time of your death.

Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) are annual increases in your benefit based on the cost of living. On the first day of each year, the Mayor determines the percentage of change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the previous year. For teachers hired on or after November 16, 1996, the annual increase may not exceed 3%.

The change is based on the difference between the price index published for December of the preceding year and the price index published for December of the year before that. If there is an increase in the price index, the cost of living adjustment is calculated as follows:

- For a retirement benefit with a start date on or before March 1 of the last year, the percentage change computed by the Mayor, rounded to the nearest 1/10 of 1%; or
- For a retirement benefit with a start date after March 1 of the last year, a pro-rata increase of:

    1/12 of the percentage of change in the price index for the prior year, multiplied by the number of months and portions of months (but no more than 12 months) that the retirement benefit was payable before the effective date of the increase, adjusted to the nearest 1/10 of 1%.

Credited Service means service for certain periods in which you were not employed by the DCPS system but for which you may receive credit to be used for purposes of calculating your retirement benefit amount.

Dependent Parents means your natural parents who were receiving one half or more of their total income from you immediately preceding your death.

DCPS System refers to the District of Columbia Public Day School System. The term does not include the D.C. Public Charter Schools.

DCPS Teacher means an employee who served in a salary class position ET 1-15 under the DCPS system. The term includes all teachers employed by the Board of Education in the DCPS, including other educational employees whose salaries are established in the District of Columbia Teachers Salary Act of 1945, as amended, except the employees of the Department of School Attendance and Work Permits.

The term includes former teachers employed by the Board of Education who terminate their employment and within 60 days, accept employment with a D.C. Public Charter School, and choose to continue to participate in the Teachers' Plan.

The term also includes teachers who are granted an extended leave of absence without pay from the DCPS system to accept a position at a public charter school.

Eligible Child(ren) means an unmarried child, including an adopted child, stepchild or a recognized natural child who is:
- under 18; or
- incapable of self-support, regardless of age, because of a mental or physical disability that occurred before he or she reached age 18; or
- between 18 and 22 years of age, who is a student regularly pursuing a full-time course of study or training in residence in a high school, trade school, technical or vocational institute, junior college, college, university or comparable recognized educational institution.

For the purposes of this plan, a child who is a full-time student whose 22nd birthday occurs before July 1 or after August 31 of a calendar year, is considered 22 years of age on the first day of July after his or her 22nd birthday.

A child will continue to be considered a student during a school break (of five or fewer months) provided the child confirms (to the satisfaction of the Secretary of the Treasury for Federal Retirement Fund benefit payments or the Mayor of D.C. for District Retirement Fund benefit payments) that he or she fully intends to continue his or her education at the same or different school during the school semester immediately after the break.

Former Spouse means a living person whose marriage to you has been subject to a divorce, annulment or legal separation resulting in a court order.

However, with respect to a survivor annuity, it also means a living person:
- who was married for at least 9 months to an employee or retiree who performed at least 18 months of creditable service in a position covered by the Teachers' Retirement Plan; and
- whose marriage to the employee or retiree was terminated prior to the death of the employee or retiree.

Lump Sum Refund for Retirement Contributions means the un-refunded amount consisting of (1) retirement deductions made from the salary of a teacher; and (2) amounts deposited into the Retirement Fund by a teacher covering earlier services; and (3) interest earned on any deductions taken from salary earned prior to January 15, 1980.

Mandatory Contributions are the contributions to the retirement fund that you are required to make.

OHR stands for the Office of Human Resources, District of Columbia Public Schools.

Plan Administrator refers to the Treasury Department, Office of D.C. Pensions for benefits earned prior to July 1, 1997, and the District of Columbia Government for benefits earned after June 30, 1997.

Qualified Domestic Relations Order (QDRO) means a qualifying court order issued by a court after March 15, 1989 that must state:

- that your former spouse is entitled to a survivor benefit or that you must provide a survivor benefit for your former spouse;
- your former spouse's share of your benefit as a fixed-dollar amount or a percentage or a fraction of a retirement benefit; and
- whether your former spouse should receive payment directly from the Treasury Department (for benefits earned on or before June 30, 1997) or the District of Columbia (for benefits earned after June 30, 1997).

Service Contributions are the deposits you may make to the retirement fund to receive credit for your credited service.

Surviving Spouse means your surviving wife or husband, who was married to you for at least two years immediately preceding your death, or is the mother or father of your child by marriage.

Survivor Benefits are benefits payable to your eligible dependent children and/or spouse when you die. For details, see pages 24-27.

Teaching Service means service in a salary class position ET 1-15 under the DCPS system or service as an eligible employee of a District of Columbia Public Charter School.

Voluntary Contributions are optional contributions you may make to the retirement fund to supplement your retirement benefit.